THE WIDENESS OF GOD'S MERCY

Posted on November 28, 2018 by Eddie

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> *One of the most important lessons the New Testament teaches in this regard is the wideness of God's mercy - the decision of God to include all the nations in the salvation won by Jesus Christ. Initially, this meant the Greekes, or more broadly those whose lives had been shaped by Hellenism. Yet in principle it included all the peoples of the world, all the different nations with their differences. Indeed the Christian fellowship was to embrace people not only of different national and ethnic cultures, but of different social classes and geners as well (Gal. 3:28-29). The vision of Revelation 21, in which all the nations of the earth are coming into the New Jerusalem complements and extends the images in the Jewish Bible. In this regard it is significant that the New Testament was written in 'KoinÄ"' Greek, the language of intercultural relationships, whether political, commercial or religious in the lands to which the Christian apostles were dispersed and in which the first Christian communities were founded.*